

BONUS SYSTEM AND METHOD OF AWARDING A BONUS

ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

A bonus system and a method of awarding a bonus associated with a gaming machine are disclosed. In one embodiment, the bonus system includes a player tracking system comprising a player tracking device at the gaming machine, a remote player tracking host and a network by which information may be sent to and from the player tracking device and player tracking host. The bonus system includes a bonus system host associated with the network, the bonus system host capable of generating bonus event information which is transmitted to the player tracking device at via the network. In one embodiment, the player tracking device includes a player tracking device controller and one or more peripherals, such as a card reader, display and speakers. Bonus event information is displayed and audible information is generated in response to the sending of bonus event information from the bonus event host to the player tracking device controller. In accordance with one method of the invention, a bonus may be awarded to a player independent of the outcome of play of a game on the machine, and independent of gaming controller activity presenting the game. In another embodiment, a bonus may be awarded to the first player to begin playing a gaming machine which is currently not in use.

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